



OPINION: THANK YOU
BLACK WOMEN VOTERS DESERVE
MORE THAN A SIMPLE THANKS.



GALLERY: SANTA & SONS
SANTA & SONS IS A STAPLE FOR
FAMILIES THIS HOLIDAY SEASON.

Students make it through turbulent year

Four Valley College students look back at a turbulent year to express the impact it has had on them, from COVID-19 to the Black Lives Matter movement.



VALLEY STAR | SOLOMON O. SMITH
STUDENT- Cristina Miller stands in front of the Valley College Theater building. After self-quarantining due to possible COVID-19 exposure, she is preparing to graduate and transfer.

AIMEE MARTINEZ
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

On Jan. 21, the CDC confirmed the first coronavirus case in the United States. Today, more than 300,000 Americans have died from COVID-19. March 25 marks the day George Floyd died under the knee of police officer Derek Chauvin. Floyd's last words, "I can't breathe,"

became the chant for protesters in Minneapolis a day later, sparking conversations about police brutality and systematic racism. The year also increased the rift in an already increasingly polarized nation. In an October Pew Research poll, 80 percent of Joe Biden supporters and 77 percent of Donald Trump supporters said that when it comes to "core American values," they "fundamentally disagree." Four

Valley College students share their own experiences and opinions as they reflect on the events of the past year.

Longing for the theater
Actress Cristina Miller would describe 2020 in a word: "wild."

For Miller, there was always something that occupied her time during quarantine — meditation, self-care, painting — in addition to working from home and taking six classes. Online classes helped her focus and provided new goals for the year. She said instructors were "kind, supportive and understanding," especially to those who miss class due to illness. Miller lives with her aunt, who caught the coronavirus, and had to quarantine with her. Her aunt recovered. Miller was unscathed, but the time indoors left a void.

"I miss the theater," said the 28 year old. "I miss hugs and intimacy, just all of what most people miss, having face to face conversations, you know, the little things. My family has unfortunately been hit, like many, with it. It's been a struggle."

The production of "Urinetown," was canceled in March. But after two months of rehearsal for that production, she refused to let that deter her and decided to perform in "Love and Information," this semester's virtual play. Miller has been acting since she was 14. She became involved in theater two years ago at Valley and found it to be her passion.

She said she was thrilled with the outcome of the election and disagrees with the way Trump has handled the results. She believes the Black Lives Matter protests this year were

necessary.

"People need to know that something historically important is still happening," said Miller. "I'm a big supporter of speaking your mind, freedom of expression and spreading awareness."

An incompetent government

For Ross Bauer, this is the second time he suffered through an economic recession. The first happened in 2007 after he graduated high school. He decided to join the Airforce so he could earn a decent paycheck.

This year has been revealing for Bauer, serving as an expose on the inherent flaws in America's society and economy. Bauer said the government's response to the pandemic is "insulting at best," as efforts to deal with unemployment are "insufficient," and it is "extremely one-sided" when it comes to businesses.

"We don't have a functioning federal government," said the 31-year-old actor. "The utter lack of regard for people who aren't huge money donors from the highest levels of our federal government is disgusting. I think it's treasonous and seditious."

Bauer cut contact with some of his extended family members after their open approval of Trump, and their advocacy for a "return to racial segregation." He said, "They use the n-word like a proper noun."

Bauer grew up near Louisville, Kentucky. In 2016, he moved to Los Angeles to pursue acting and in 2019, participated in his first production — a series of one-act plays. Bauer and other Valley students created a production group called Less Than



VALLEY STAR | SOLOMON O. SMITH
THEATER- Ross Bauer, an Air Force Veteran and Valley College theater major, stands in front of a flyer for "Urinetown," a play that he and others rehearsed for, but was canceled due to the pandemic.

Strangers earlier this year. They have produced two short films with the second accepted in several film festivals.

After working as an Uber driver on New Year's, Bauer caught the coronavirus. He began to feel symptoms after a few days, gradually worsening and was confined to his bed for two weeks where he "felt like death." Though he recovered, his great aunt also contracted

the virus and died in October.

Bauer quit smoking during quarantine, started eating better and exercising and lost about 25 pounds. He works from home as a voice actor and continues to take online classes. They are not his preferred method of learning and as a kinesthetic learner, starting at a computer screen is not

see 2020 p.2

Athletic Director Jim Fenwick ends his season

After more than four decades of coaching football at colleges such as CSUN, Pierce and Valley, Jim Fenwick will retire at the end of the calendar year.

GENE WICKHAM
STAFF WRITER

Football coach and Valley College Athletic Director Jim Fenwick is retiring after 46 years of coaching football at various colleges and universities around the country.

He has expressed a diverse love of sports which he exhibits through his involvement with tennis.

"I was always an instructor first, meaning that I taught classes and coached football until I became the athletic director," he said. "Even then and now, I really enjoy teaching tennis classes for the college, as I have grown up playing the game and enjoy teaching others to play the lifetime sport."

Originally a native of Idaho, Fenwick grew up in the San Fernando Valley where he attended Grover Cleveland High School in Reseda. Later, he went on to Pierce College in Woodland Hills.

After playing football in high school, Fenwick played one year at Pierce (1970-71) and four years at Wichita State University (1971-1974) where he was team captain. He later earned a Master's of Arts in education at Cal Lutheran University in 1976.

His coaching career began at Pierce College in 1974 and continued at Valley and CSUN through 1988. In 1988, he joined the University of Miami, Ohio and the University of the Pacific

as special teams coach/running backs. In 1991, he returned to Valley for six years where he was voted coach of the year in 1994. His five-year record at Valley was 50-15.

"The game has taught me several attributes of trust, competition, fundamentals, work habits, collaboration, accountability, research and preparation that have been part of the challenge of teaching."

- Jim Fenwick

In 1997, Fenwick returned to CSUN during turbulent times for athletics at the university. In 2001, CSUN eliminated their football program and other sports for budgetary reasons. Fenwick tried to intercede and reflected on his participation.

"It has been a decision that I have questioned ever since, thinking that maybe I could have helped prevent them from making the decision to cancel their program, as it was an opportunity for many young people locally to play and represent the SF Valley," he said.

With the cancellation of

football at CSUN, he eventually accepted a position as the offensive coordinator for the University of New Mexico in 1998.

He met his wife, Galye, at Wichita State. He has two sons: Casey and Tyler. Tyler and his wife Angela have three children — Kyleigha, Kayden and Kiptyn — and Casey and his wife Ashley have two children: London, and Kai. Fenwick was stricken with Leukemia in 2004. According to a recent Los Angeles Times profile, the prognosis was not looking good until a bone marrow transplant from his son Casey saved his life.

By 2001, Fenwick became the offensive coordinator at Occidental College in LA before returning to Valley as head football coach in 2009. He was promoted to athletic director in 2012. Through the years, Fenwick has been head coach for Pierce, Valley and CSUN.

"He's had a tremendous impact. I'm going to miss Coach Fenwick tremendously. I know that I can rely on his council," Valley President Barry Gribbons remarked. "The interests of the student athletes were always of Jim's highest priority. He is incredibly dedicated, has worked tirelessly for all the athletic programs. He's got a huge heart and passion for athletics and supporting student athletes and we're just gonna miss him tremendously."

Reflecting on his 46 years coaching sports, Fenwick recalls



VALLEY STAR | AVA ROSATE
COACH- Jim Fenwick will retire on Dec. 31 after being athletic director at Valley College since 2012. Fenwick was involuntary transferred from Pierce College after Prop. 13 had teachers moving around schools.

his work with players and students.

"Playing the game and coaching have been challenging and fun," he reflected. "The game has taught me several attributes of trust, competition, fundamentals, work habits, collaboration, accountability,

research and preparation that have been part of the challenge in teaching. I am most proud of being a teacher first, to help individuals develop such attributes in their prep for life beyond the game."

Valley plans to have someone fill Fenwick's position on an

interim basis and then recruit for a permanent replacement later. Gribbons said there are several candidates for the interim position, but did not list any names.

LACCD extends sheriff contract until June

After initially announcing that their contract with the sheriff’s department would expire at the end of the year, LACCD extended it for another six months.



SHERIFF- A sheriff security officer sits in his car at a check-in station in front of the Valley College Administration Building.

GABRIEL ARIZON
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The LACCD Board of Trustees voted on Saturday to extend their contract with the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department for another six months over hiring unarmed security.

"There will be no change to the sheriff's department provid-

ing security services at Valley College or any of the other LACCD locations," said Valley President Barry Gribbons.

On Dec. 12, the Board of Trustees convened for a special meeting to discuss short-term security proposals for 2021. The board presented two options: a six-month extension with the LASD (with the option for further extensions) for an annual budget of \$19.6 million, or

hire unarmed private security from Allied Universal Security Services for a 12-month term with a \$15 million annual budget. After much discussion, the board voted on the former.

Before the vote, the board took comments from the public to hear their thoughts, many of whom expressed apprehension of unarmed security in place of sheriffs and concerns that this new change would lead to more

problems.

"Myself and our cadets will not feel safe there with an 18-year-old unarmed security officer 'protecting' us," said Francoise Rosero, a senior office assistant in the sheriff's complex at Southwest College. "With all the things that happen on campuses with armed security, imagine what's going to happen when it's some 18-year-old kid there."

"If this contract is allowed to expire, I am concerned about ... how we will be able to reach out to students in crisis without the support of the sheriff's department," said Sonia Lopez, a dean of student services at East Los Angeles College. "Now is not the time to bring in a security company that is not familiar with our campus, our students or our community."

"What I have noticed ... [is] that most of the complaints that have come forward to me regarding the sheriffs are from women or from minorities and I have tried my best to resolve those complaints and the majority of those complaints have never been resolved."
- Ruby Christain-Brougham

The LACCD has had a partnership with LASD since 2001, one that was originally set to expire at the end of the year. The district's budget for the LASD contract was \$25.8 million annually, whereas the new approved proposal costs an estimated 24 percent less.

According to LACCD data as reported by LASD, there were 644 incidents in 2019 across all nine campuses; of those incidents, 465 were crimes and 60 arrests were made. As stated by Interim Deputy Chancellor Melinda Nish, the estimate of damages caused by criminal activity to the district was \$562,000. Overall, the district saw a 15 percent decrease in crime from 2018 to 2019.

While the private security proposal did not pass, there were some public comments that voiced their support for it, citing problems with the sheriffs.

"What I have noticed ... [is] that most of the complaints that have come forward to me regarding the sheriffs are from women or from minorities," said Ruby Christian-Brougham, the AFT Local 1521 chapter president at Valley, "and I have tried my best to resolve those complaints and the majority of those complaints have never been resolved."

According to Chancellor Francisco Rodriguez, the district will begin a thorough assessment of campus safety at all nine colleges beginning Jan. 1, and the process will include voices from students, faculty and administrators. The assessment will be the basis for Request for Proposals for long-term security in the district. Rodriguez expects the process to take between six to 12 months.

Four Valley College students recount life in 2020

[SPIKE FROM A1]

ideal. On Instagram, Bauer sees friends from Australia and New Zealand going to bars, concerts, restaurants, sports games — living normal lives. The only time they wear a mask is at the hospital or on planes. He said it makes him cry.

This year has made Bauer more cynical and changed his political affiliation from liberal to socialist. He thinks the way social issues were addressed were not substantial enough.

"When it comes to the neoliberal outlook on it," said Bauer. "In terms of addressing racism, calling out Karens and people who use the n-word in public, on that surface level, sure it has definitely been a better and more effective response because now that people know who Karens are, they're afraid to come out of their holes."

Let's talk about unity

For Sharlot Colmemary, 2020 was a year to learn about her family and herself. Before the country shut down, every day consisted of going to class and going to work. Quarantine forced her to stay home more and learn about her parents and their relationship. Online classes turned out to be easier for Colmemary as many were pre-recorded and she could work at her own pace.

The 19 year old thanked God that she did not lose her job. In-N-Out even gave her two weeks off, with pay before employees returned to work. Though she has not experienced financial hardship, the lockdown has taken an emotional toll.

"You appreciate your everyday life, like going to the park and going out to eat with friends," said the Venezuelan native.

The business management major believes masks should be enforced, but shutting down the country and California is too

extreme. Colmemary believes the government did the best they could because "no one is ever ready for a pandemic." She believes the media could have handled it better.

Colmemary considers protests to be a beneficial catalyst for change if done the right way. There are problems in this country she said, but looting is the wrong way to fight for minorities rights and just causes. She thinks it is "hateful and unfair to business owners and the community."

"Really in my heart, truly believing that things will get better. I really believe that. As much as I have been hurt by my government and fellow citizens, I feel like things can and will get better."
- Joshua Esquivel

On social media, Colmemary saw many ignorantly posting or reposting comments on issues because they were made by celebrities. She saw these lead to conversations about defunding the police, a concept she disagrees with.

"Let's fight for George Floyd," said Colmemary. "Let's fight for them but not in the sense where let's just defund the police altogether."

Colmemary fears the nation may not get back to a sense of normalcy, but hopes the country can find some peace.

"My hopes are that we can find a place to be united as a country," she said. "Right now the country is still very divided."

A hope for a better future

Joshua Esquivel is doing everything he can to keep himself sane and positive, but there is still the constant anxiety and fear of his family getting infected.

Esquivel said many have underestimated the virus, with some in more affluent communities walking maskless and behaving like "the stakes are not high for them." However, he understands the plight of those who need to work.

"It's been annoying how so many of us have had to shoulder the burden of others who don't want to follow fairly simple instructions as far as staying inside and wearing a mask outside," said Esquivel. "We have a great schism in the country about what matters."

Esquivel said it is "criminal" how Trump's administration has handled the virus and in the end, the nation will be "shell shocked" by how much damage was caused. With Trump's refusal to step down and election fraud allegations, he hopes all of it is a wakeup call for Americans. Esquivel supposes the nation was due for a "bona fide tyrant."

Esquivel warned that with an abundance of information and an influential media, people must be vigilant. Without proper research, people can be deceived, he added.

"We have a responsibility to ourselves and to each other to make sure we are getting the right information in our minds and then spreading the right information, not just taking in anything we hear," said Esquivel.

He wanted to attend more protests. However, his partner suffers from a lung condition and he lives with his grandmother and nephew and did not want to risk their health. This concern over the coronavirus prevents him from looking for a job. Friends who are essential



PRODUCTION- Joshua Esquivel, pictured in front of the Valley College Theater building's ticket office. Esquivel has started his own acting group, called Virthe Productions, to deal with the pandemic.

workers have recounted to him horror stories about the lack of safety protocols in their industries.

In terms of the Black Lives Matter protests, Esquivel says he is not a "blue or red person," but just wants to see politicians follow through with their promises.

"We have to hold these people accountable, the powers that be," he said. "I'm tired of being told, 'we hear you, we see you.' Do you really though? Or are you just trying to get me off your back. I've heard a lot of nice pretty sentiments, but I want to see

real action."

The 26 year old has been keeping active during quarantine, meditating, practising Spanish, completing chores and helping his family. He also started a theater company with students from Valley called Virthe Productions. The Latinx actor was helping out with the opera "Sweet Land," but like many other productions, it was canceled.

Esquivel remembers students as "passing faces," not really connecting with each other on campus. Online, despite a screen of blacked-out cameras,

he felt more camaraderie. He could hear the affection in his fellow students' voices.

Looking back at the past nine months, Esquivel said people have been through a lot, but he is still optimistic.

"[I am] just trying to stay above water, holding my breath, crossing my fingers, being positive," he said. "Really in my heart, truly believing that things will get better. I really believe that. As much as I have been hurt by my government and fellow citizens, I feel like things can and will get better."

After the vote; “Thank you Black women”

A simple “thank you” is not enough for saving the vote and rallying the country to elect Joe Biden.

SAVANNAH SIMMONS
MANAGING EDITOR

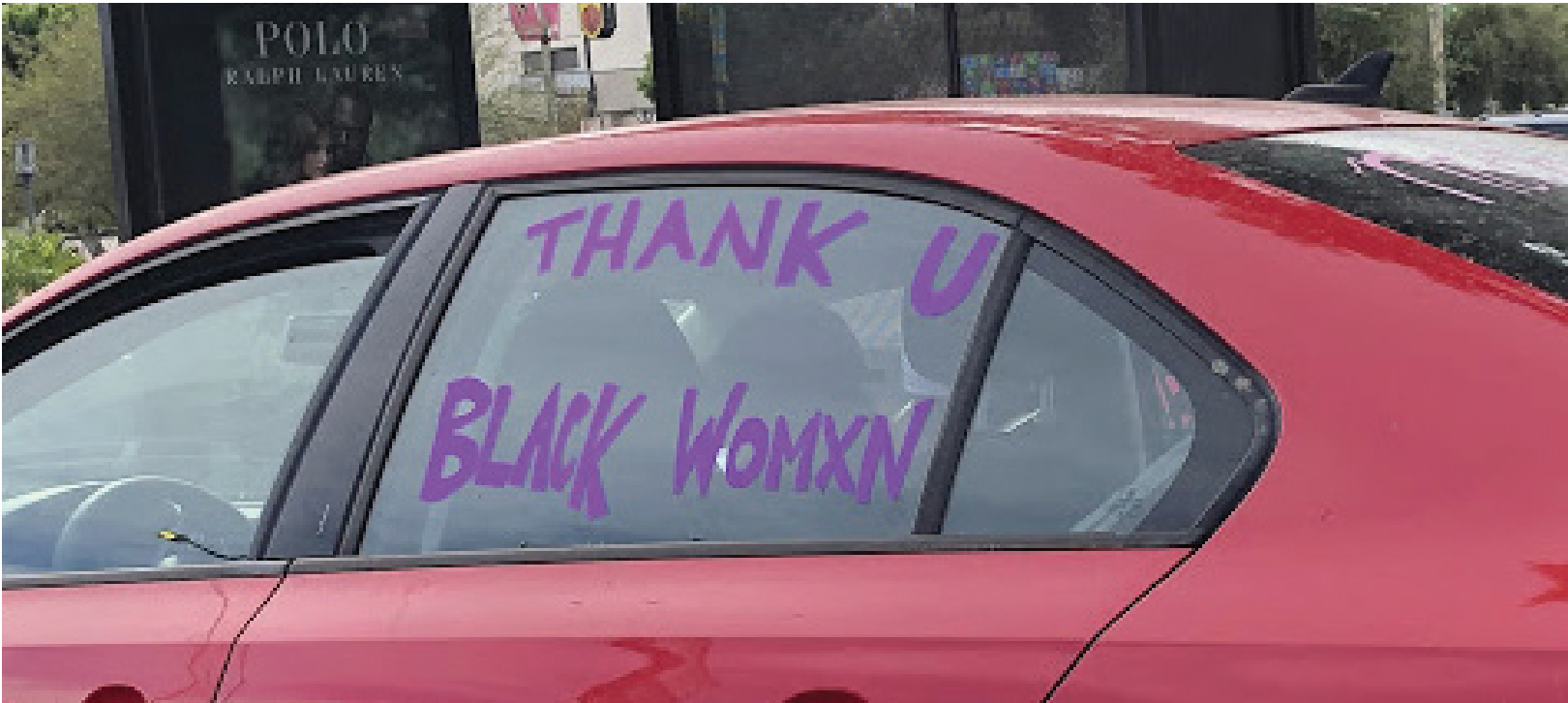
Black women constantly show up and demand change by exercising their right to vote and saying “thank you” is not enough.

For the last three elections, voter turnout among Black women has been higher than any other group of women and has been a steady Democrat anchor. Democrats and liberals have praised Black women for their support which led to the defeat of President Donald J Trump.

“I want to speak directly to the Black women in our country. Thank you,”
-Kamala Harris

“I want to speak directly to the Black women in our country. Thank you,” tweeted Kamala Harris after the election. “You are too often overlooked, and yet are asked time and again to step up and be the backbone of our democracy. We could not have done this without you.”

It is estimated that 91 percent of Black women voted for Joe Biden and Harris last November and without their votes in battleground states like Georgia, the Biden Harris ticket could have been lost. Key findings in a Black Women’s Roundtable/ESSENCE survey showed that the most important issues for



CONTRIBUTOR | LAUREN LOTZ

THANKS- People in Silverlake took to the streets to celebrate their joy with others after the news of Joe Biden’s win broke.

Black women were racism, the rise in hate crimes, affordable healthcare and criminal justice and police reforms. National concerns that benefit everyone, not just Black women or people of color.

A 2016 study revealed that many white medical students believed that Black patients had a higher pain tolerance than white people, which is not only racist but completely false. Things like stronger immune systems, thicker skin and less sensitivity of Black patients were among the false ideas that 73 percent of the participating students believed.

Maternal mortality is also high on the list of dangers for Black women and in the United States the gap in death rates for different ethnicities are massive.

In a 2020 report published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the highest is non-Hispanic Black with 37.1 deaths per 100,000 live births, non-Hispanic white at 14.7 and Hispanic at 11.8. Black women to be two times more at risk is unacceptable.

“Maternal mortality is an important indicator of the health of a nation,” said Bob Anderson, chief of the mortality statistics branch at the National Center for Health Statistics. “These are deaths that are almost entirely preventable.”

Black women are in danger because of racism in healthcare and something more must be done. Knowing that Black women are at higher risk right off the bat, healthcare workers should

take extreme precautions when caring for these patients.

“There’s not much room for passionate advocacy if you are a Black woman.”
-Megan Thee Stallion

Black women are also 2.5 times more likely to be killed by a man than white women and

40 percent of Black women will experience domestic violence according to blackburncenter.org. Last summer, popular rapper Megan Thee Stallion was shot twice by rapper Tory Lanez and received not only backlash but skepticism about the shooting.

“The issue is even more intense for Black women, who struggle against stereotypes and are seen as angry or threatening when we try to stand up for ourselves and our sisters,” wrote Thee Stallion in an essay for the New York Times. “There’s not much room for passionate advocacy if you are a Black woman.”

It has long been time to listen to Black women, respect Black women and protect them when they have done so much to protect us.



VALLEY STAR | MARGARITA GARUSHYAN

SHOPPING- Shoppers explore the eclectic items for sale at Hidden Treasures, a vintage clothing store in Topanga, California that features couture clothing, accessories and more.

The weight of thrifting

Thrift shopping has increased as a trend but the recent uptick may be pushing out those who depend on affordable fashion.

JASMINE ALEJANDRE
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Thrifting is a new trend among teenagers that is helping combat climate change, but it is also hurting low-income families.

Thanks to social media and its influencers, many teenagers are now choosing to buy second-hand clothing. They argue, buying second-hand clothing is less expensive, and it helps the planet. A win-win. Not so fast. As this trend increases, many low-income communities have noticed that prices at their local thrift stores have increased.

“The reasons people thrift is endless, but the intentions should not be to romanticize poverty. That’s not cool,” said Andy Diaz from The Stanford Daily, a website that reports on culture for the younger generation.

The thrifting sensation has taken over the industry. This phenomenon is most popular among teenagers and college students. They find themselves buying secondhand clothing, instead of shopping at stores like H&M, Forever 21 and Urban

Outfitters. The reason? Well, it is both better for the environment, and for their pockets. Thrifting offers the chance to buy clothing that is inexpensive, eco-friendly, and authentic.

But those stores offer what is called “fast fashion, items made cheaply with no intention to be owned for a long time. The reason why this is so bad is because it is bad for the environment.

Fast fashion is the highest water polluter, and it amounts to high landfill waste. More people are becoming aware about this, and they are speaking out about it, whether it be on social media, or just casual conversations with friends.

And, social media has also become a factor that is contributing to the rise of thrifting. Influencers are posting videos of themselves finding pieces at thrift stores, even doing “thrifting hauls,” videos where they show off everything they found.

There are also those influencers who sell their own pieces of clothing on apps such as Poshmark and Depop. These apps let users buy second-hand clothes online, as well as set up their own accounts to sell

unwanted items.

Another thing social media has done? It has set trends, trends that people want to copy but do not have the money to buy the expensive clothes, so people resort to buying second hand pieces.

The rise of thrifting is benefiting the planet, but it could also be hurting those who depend on buying secondhand clothes.

As more shoppers flood the thrift stores, the stores feel emboldened to raise their prices. One thrift store used to sell many items for a few dollars, but now most clothing items are sold by the pound. So sweaters and other heavier clothes are more expensive than before.

“Thrifting no longer carries strong taboos of uncleanness and poverty as it had in the past,” wrote Nanditha Nair in the Berkeley Economic Review.

Now families who depend on thrift stores are priced out of their clothes or are left with fewer options than before.

Yes. Everyone has the right to shop for second-hand clothes, but the trend could also leave others out in the cold. Something to think about.

Operation Olivia Jade takes accountability

Operation Varsity Blues student opens up about the college bribery scandal but admits she still has learning to do.

SAVANNAH SIMMONS
MANAGING EDITOR

Olivia Jade Giannulli took to “Red Table Talk” last Tuesday to publicly apologize for her part in the college bribery scandal that erupted early last year.

Giannulli and her sister, Bella, found themselves at the center of this wrongdoing as their mother and actress Lori Laughlin was the most well known member of the ring while Olivia has a following of her own on social media. Laughlin and her husband, fashion designer Massimo Giannulli, paid \$500,000 to get both their daughters into USC as rowing recruits though the girls never took part in the sport.

“I think what was important was for me to come here and say, ‘I’m sorry. I acknowledge what was wrong,’” said Giannulli during the episode. “I wasn’t able to say that for so long. So I think people almost thought, ‘Oh, she must not care.’”

“A huge part of having privilege is not knowing you have privilege. And so when it was happening it didn’t feel wrong. It didn’t feel like ‘That’s not fair.’”
- Olivia Jade Giannulli

While Giannulli said she realizes the fault in her parents’ actions, something she did not see a problem with initially, she left out the crucial detail that she posed for pictures on a rowing machine to get into USC as an athlete. It is admirable to accept fault in such a public platform, but to not mention the rowing photos seems deceitful.

Giannulli blamed her veil of privilege on why she did not understand that her parents’ donation to USC was a problem. She refers to her community of friends and peers as a “bubble” that ultimately clouded her judgement and ability to recognize fault initially.

“A huge part of having privilege is not knowing you have privilege. And so when it was happening it didn’t feel wrong,” admitted Giannulli. “It didn’t feel like ‘That’s not fair, a lot of people don’t have that.’”

Growing up a part of the one percent cannot be something that is passive. To be engulfed in wealth and luxury in Los Angeles is to also be aware of the hardships other people face in the same city. Homelessness in Los Angeles is apparent everywhere and very hard to miss. Parents of such elite status should make it a point to raise their kids to understand their privilege, if not it is a failure.

“I think that what hasn’t been super public is that there is no justifying or excusing what happened because what happened was wrong,” Giannulli explained. “But I think what is so important to me is to learn from that mistake. Not to be shamed and punished.”

Giannulli admits that it took her awhile, but she is now educating herself on matters of social justice issues and now calls herself the “poster child of white privilege.” She does not want to “just throw money at a problem” but wants to instead have a more hands-on approach, and shared that her view shifted after a visit to an after-school program in Watts.

“They were so grateful for that education, that after-school place that they could go, away from their neighborhood,” Giannulli said. “I was watching all of them, and I was thinking about my situation, and that I took all of that for granted.”

This is just the beginning for Giannulli. She must break out of her “bubble”, and use her resources to help students who are less fortunate than her. Education is power, and learning about the struggles of students without her privilege will help Giannulli find a way to help them. Helping those less fortunate than her is a good place to start.

The Valley Star

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GOT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR?

Letters to the editor can be submitted online at www.thevalleystarnews.com. Letters must be limited to 300 words and may be edited for content. Full name and contact information must be supplied in order for letters to be printed. Send by Thursday for the following week’s issue.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DALE BECK

ABOVE- Monarch Running Back R'mon Huff prepares to evade Pierce College defenders in a fall 2019 game. (File Photo)

RIGHT- Quarterback Andrew Galvin runs towards the endzone as the opposing Pierce College players attempt to tackle him. (File Photo)



Fall sports won't return for competition in spring

Los Angeles COVID-19 levels are hampering the restart of sports in January.

GENE WICKHAM
STAFF WRITER

Due to the current high COVID-19 infection levels across the nation, especially in Southern California, the return of fall sports in January has been ruled out.

"With the COVID-19 spiking in LA County, we are expecting to opt out for the spring one schedule," said Jim Fenwick, Valley College athletic director.

When the COVID-19 lockdown began in mid-March, the fall 2019 sports were completed and the winter sports were finishing their season. Everything came to an abrupt halt and the following spring season was canceled as a result. There has been no sports competition since.

The California Community College Athletic Association met in July and informed the community colleges that a decision to start sports again would be announced by the end of October. On Nov. 6, the organization announced the decision to start sports again would be left up to the individual colleges and districts to decide, depending on their local health situation.

The CCCAA had laid out

a plan at their meeting hoping to return to sports on Jan. 18, during the spring 2021 semester. The association had basically squeezed three sport seasons into one. However, that will no longer be the case.

"We are working with the district though in the recovery planning to identify phases at which we can bring student athletes back to campus."

- Barry Gribbons

Valley President Barry Gribbons has been keeping abreast of the situation and learned the LACCD board declined to approve the return of any sports in the spring due to the current rise in COVID-19.

"We're not able to continue with competition for fall sports that were moved to the spring semesters," he said.

Gribbons had been monitoring the actions of other colleges and conferences and noted the South Coast Conference canceled their competitions for the January fall sports. While the Western State Conference (which Valley is a part of) has not made any announcement yet, Gribbons said they are likely to follow suit.

"We are working with the district though in the recovery planning to identify phases at which we can bring student athletes back to campus," he said.

The spring was supposed to allow for the fall and winter sports to convene on Jan. 18 and the spring sports to follow afterwards in the second half of the semester. With the current local health situation, all spring sports have been cancelled.

Currently, there is no date for when student athletes can meet for practice or conditioning for either fall or spring sports.

THE ISSUE

Fall sports affected by the decision include football, water polo and basketball.

Free Wi-fi in campus lot

Wi-Fi will be accessible in parking lot F, but students must stay in their car.

MARCOS FRANCO
STAFF WRITER

Students looking for a safe and convenient place to study and prepare for finals outside of their bedroom are in luck as Valley College offers free Wi-Fi on campus.

"Clearly we can't have conditions where students are gathering and creating unsafe conditions."

- Barry Gribbons

Although free internet access may draw students to campus, proper health protocols such as social distancing and facial coverings will be enforced. Service will be provided in parking lot F, located on Ethel Avenue, north of Burbank Boulevard until Dec. 20. Instruction for network connection is available on Valley's getting connected

page. Students are to remain in their car at all times as well as keep an empty parking space in between vehicles. Restrooms and device charging stations will not be available.

"Clearly we can't have conditions where students are gathering and creating unsafe conditions, [like] not physical distancing," said Valley President Barry Gribbons. "It will be safe for students to remain in their cars to access the Wi-Fi signal."

According to Microsoft, at least six independent studies show that broadband internet (download speeds of at least 25 Mbps and upload speeds of at least 3 Mbps) has a direct impact on job and economic growth; however, many low-income households lack high-speed internet because they cannot afford it. Students who depend on public resources such as school, libraries or cafés for Wi-Fi have been limited by business closures making it difficult to complete schoolwork or access video conferencing.

Since the start of the pandemic, multiple internet service providers have updated their low-cost service programs in order to ensure reliable internet

access for all students who need it. The Los Angeles Community College District (LACCD) has partnered with EveryoneOn, a nonprofit organization that aims to offer affordable internet service and computers to low income households. Since 2012, EveryoneOn has connected more than 784,000 people to the internet as well as distributed thousands of computers.

While on-campus internet was made accessible for only the final two weeks of the fall semester, Valley plans to offer students free Wi-Fi for the full length of the winter session and spring semester, though the location may change.

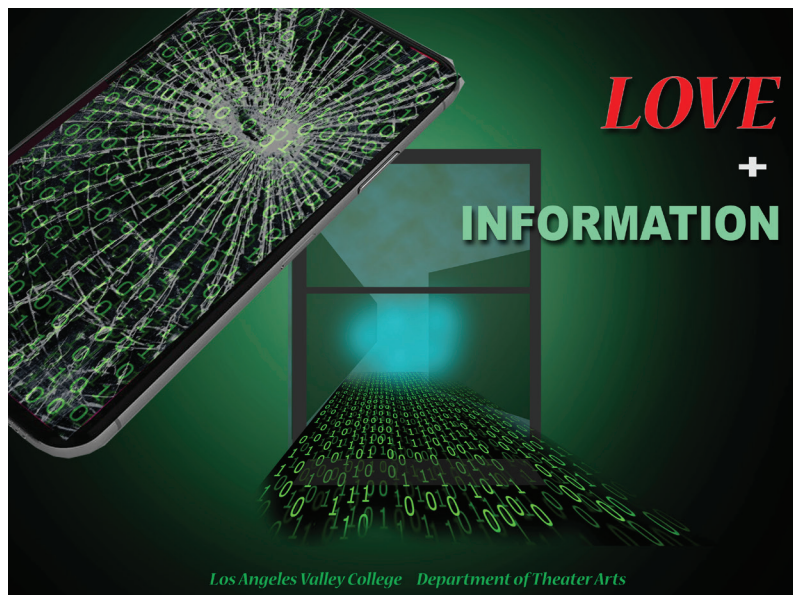
"We'll also make it available for winter and spring," said Gribbons. "We might change the location though to a parking lot that's a little bit easier for students to get in and out of."

While reliable high-speed internet has always been important to society, it has become a necessity in today's world. Every day, schools and businesses become more dependent on the digital realm and without a sufficient Wi-Fi connection, students seeking new educational opportunities are limited.



VALLEY STAR | MARCOS FRANCO

VACANT- Parking lot F empty on the Friday before finals week as students prepare for exams elsewhere.



Los Angeles Valley College Department of Theater Arts

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION | GENE WICKHAM

PLAY- The Theater Department held this semester's play via Zoom.

AIMEE MARTINEZ
VALLEY LIFE EDITOR

COVID-19 left Valley College's Theater Department without a stage and relegated its actors to their homes, but through phones and computers they managed to reenact Caryl Churchill's play "Love and Information."

In 57 scenes, 20 actors — ranging from ages 19 to close to 80 — explored the different ways people receive, process and translate information in their lives. The department struggled to find a play that could

adapt well to the virtual medium, and the flexible structure of Churchill's piece did just that. The script contained no scene or character descriptions, not even a separation in dialogue; the only details were the scene's title and content. The play is divided into seven chapters with different vignettes and new characters in each one. The way these interactions are represented is entirely up to the director.

"It's fun because [the writer] gives you the opportunity to do as you think and feel as you feel in that moment," said 28-year-

Acting on a virtual Zoom stage

The new theater production utilized a virtual medium instead of the traditional live performance.

old theater major Cristina Miller. "There are so many scenes, but they all kind of connect in a way. So, it's beautiful in that sense."

Director Cathy Susan Pyles would read through each scene with the cast and ask if any part spoke to them. Sometimes her interpretation determined the story and the casting, such as in one scene where a man does not remember his wife. To her, this depicted Alzheimer's disease and required older actors. Other times Pyles embellished other actors' ideas.

The first two weeks of rehearsal consisted of 60 appointments according to each team's availability, where Pyles spent 30 minutes with each group reading through the script and deciding details such as who will play what part. Thirty-one-year-old actor Ross Bauer expressed how it was good to see people's faces and hear their voices live.

Most of the time it made sense to divide the dialogue into every other line. Actors created their own character backgrounds and Pyles helped them develop their characters

and storylines. In a scene entitled "Mother," actress Kristina Sullivan played a woman who, at 13, gives birth to a daughter. Her parents decided to raise them as sisters.

"You might like to know, mum's not your mother," said Sullivan to her co-star on the screen next to her. "I'm your mother. Did you listen?"

To prepare for the role, Sullivan, Pyles and her co-star worked together to figure out her family history, asking various questions: What are the family dynamics? Is she living at home with her daughter? Is she having another child? What is prompting her to say this now?

Bauer said he would read his part over and over again, identifying the words that acted as beats, finding the mood shifts in the dialogue as well as the appropriate reactions to statements the other actors would make. When rehearsals came, the scenes he practiced changed. Pyles' interpretation worked better than his own and though he had to relearn them, he found in it a lesson on how to analyze

a script.

Short pieces were recorded first with the more challenging ones left until the end. Depending on the scene, it could take two to three or nine to 10 takes. Some of the main difficulties came in scenes with fast pacing and overlapping dialogue. Zoom can only handle one person speaking at a time.

"It does help that we're able to see each other on our monitors," said Bauer. "But without that human presence, it's something we have to overcome. It's something every student actor is going to have to learn how to do for the time being."

Other difficulties included poor Wi-Fi connection and recording quality, as well as sound and audio glitches at times. For some scenes, each location required similar lighting and framing to portray characters being in the same room. Pyles would tell the actors to put a teddy bear in their designated line of sight to help.

Miller faced her own set of challenges, being three hours ahead in Ohio to visit family at

the start of filming. Since she was staying in a cabin, Miller needed to make sure she had service as well as the time and space to film. Miller's philosophy in dealing with Zoom was to accept the format, play with it and talk just as she would if she were on it because it would be more challenging to pretend otherwise.

For Bauer, though the play is not as visceral as it would be live, he says it gives him a chance to practice the craft however he can. Miller similarly expressed how it was beneficial for them to keep their mind busy, to collaborate with others and not be alone in these times.

"Especially when it comes to love, pretty much that's usually the motivation for anybody to ever do anything," said Sullivan. "Maybe they love a person or they love money. Whatever it is, I think at the root of it all, the main theme of the play is really relevant and would resonate with any type of person, which I think is great because anybody can watch it."

BEARS- Black bears are one of the highlight in the park zoo. Wild bears roam the local area and park officials warn campers to store food properly.



AVIARY- A wake of turkey vultures roost in bare trees near the Nature Study Museum in the park.

Bears and vultures and foxes ... Oh my!

Bear Mountain State Park in New York’s Hudson Valley offers a respite from quarantine fatigue. Native animals, trailside zoo, lake views and museums greet brave visitors.



LAKE VIEW- The placid water of Hessian Lake in the Hudson Highlands near Bear Mountain, New York offered a wide range of activities including boating, fishing and hiking on Thursday, Dec. 10. VALLEY STAR | LEAH THOMPSON

PAPPILLON- Painted Lady butterflies displayed Bear Mountain State Park in one of its four natural and historic museums about 50 miles from New York City.



TRICKSTER- A red fox hunkers down in the park zoo, located between Hessian Lake and the Hudson River. Other attractions include a merry-go-round, picnic tables and winter iceskating.



VALLEY STAR | JUAN GRAJEDA II

NO CONTACT- A Santa & Sons worker loads a tree into a car trunk under a giant tent that customers enter one end and out the other, in a contactless environment, last Thursday at Valley College lot G. Generations of families have flocked to this Oregon based tree farming company remaining a staple with customers this holiday season. This tree lot has been at Valley for the past 20 years and opened for business Black Friday after Thanksgiving Day.

Drive-thru Christmas

Santa & Sons retails Oregon-grown fir trees at Valley with social distance innovation



TAGGED- Small, ready for sale, Christmas trees wait for patrons of this valley institution. The Oregon based Santa & Sons has been a Los Angeles tradition since 1983.



BRING IT- A worker pulls a hand cart past waiting trees across the parking lot sales floor. As part the physical distanced service, trees can be delivered throughout the San Fernando Valley and many other nearby communities.



OFFICE TIME- A worker pokes her head into the mobile office on the tree lot.